

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### Description of Audubon.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK'

*Dear Sir:—*

Recently when examining a file of the 'Sentinel & Witness,' a weekly newspaper published in Middletown, Conn., now discontinued, I found in the issue for September 6, 1843, the following letter, copied from the 'Buffalo Courier.' I do not recall seeing elsewhere such a vivid description of Audubon.

"Messrs. Editors: Mr. Weed, in one of his recent letters from London, quoting Mr. Audubon, our great ornithologist and naturalist, as one of the American authors, says: "he is not sure that Mr. Audubon is an American." Should the remark catch the eye of the great 'trapper' nothing would give him more displeasure than to be even suspected of being an European. Mr. Audubon was born in New Orleans, is now sixty years of age and resides in New York City about nine miles up town. The writer had the pleasure of a personal interview with him at St. Louis, in April last, and learned these facts from his own lips.

"Mr. Audubon is a man about the middle stature; his hair is white with age, and somewhat thin; he combs it back from an ample forehead, his face being sharp at the chin; has grey whiskers, an aquiline nose, and a hazle eye, small, keen and indicative of great tranquility, and sweetness of temper, cheerfulness and genius. He is a man of robust constitution though not of a stout frame. He told me he had not taken a particle of medicine for twenty years. He is capable of any fatigue; can walk thirty-five miles a day with ease, for months; can sleep any-where in the open air; endure all climates; his principal food being soaked sea biscuit and molasses. He cannot well masticate meat on account of having lost his teeth, from which he suffers, and is obliged to boil his meat to rags.

"He wore a dark frock coat, velvet vest and blue hunting shirt; is very pleasing and agreeable in conversation, and makes one perfectly at ease in his presence. He says a man can live one hundred years with temperate habits, regularity, and attention to diet.

"He was about starting up the Missouri — said he was entirely done with ornithology; his object now being to classify the American quadrupeds. He was severe on Buffon, whose book he regarded of no authority; said Buffon was a man of wealth, resided in Paris, and wrote his descriptions from dried skins, and drew largely upon his fancy. Mr. Audubon anticipated a good deal of pleasure, and much hard trapping, shooting,

drawing and writing. He takes all his drafts from the animal as soon after it is taken as circumstances will admit."

The Secretary of the Buffalo Historical Society writes me that the letter above referred to was published in the 'Buffalo Courier,' August 22, 1843. No signature was attached.

Sincerely yours,

JNO. H. SAGE.

Portland, Conn., Feb. 12, 1917.

### Concealing Coloration.

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK'

*Dear Sir:—*

In our book on Concealing Coloration the Schillings flashlit zebra photographs were included solely to show what kind of background zebras have at their drinking places.

Flash-light, illuminating so disproportionately the nearest objects (the zebras) could not, of course, illustrate these patterns' normal function.

Our omission to state this beneath the pictures was an oversight.

To every owner of our book whom I can reach, I am now sending, gratis, for substitution for one of the Schillings pictures, a copy of the very remarkable zebra-concealment illustration that I published in the bulletin of The Am. Museum of Nat. History.

I beg every owner of our book, who lacks this picture, to ask me for one.

Respectfully,

ABBOTT H. THAYER.

Monadnock, N. H., March 6, 1917.

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

SAMUEL WRIGHT, an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union since 1895, died at Yonkers, N. Y., on January 18, 1917. Mr. Wright was born June 25, 1875, at Conshohocken, Pa., where his entire life was spent until about a year ago when business interests compelled him to move temporarily to New York. He was the son of William Wright and Frances Cresson, and was educated at the Friends' boarding school at Westtown, Chester Co., Pa. After graduation he held one of the Jessup scholarships at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, where he rendered valuable service in the ornithological department and delighted in the